

## Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5846

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE COTONOU 0150

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, DM

SUBJECT: COTONOU PORT GRAIN SHIPMENTS

REF: (A) NIAMEY 217

(B) PURCELL-PROUTY RADIOCON, JANUARY 23, 1974

NIAMEY FOR RDO; DEPARTMENT PASS AID/W

1. EMBASSY OFFERS FOLLOWING POINTS TO ADO STAFF FOR USE IN ITS EVALUATION VARIOUS PROPOSALS FOR HANDLING U.S. GRAIN SHIPMENTS DURING 1974. CONCUR FULLY WITH REF (A) POSITION THAT SHIPMENTS TO MALI VIA COTONOU GAO-RAILROAD ROUTE SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED IF THEY WILL INTERFERE WITH NIGER GRAIN TRAFFIC. IN THIS CONNECTION, DO WE REALLY NEED YET ANOTHER STUDY? SEEMS THAT ADO STAFF HAS ALREADY SUBMITTED DETAILS ABOUT CAPACITY AND CONDITIONS OF COTONOU PORT, OCDN RAILROAD, PARAKOU STORAGE FACILITIES, TRUCKERS AND PARAKOU-NIAMEY ROAD. WOULD THINK, THEREFORE, PROPOSED ADDITIONAL STUDY COULD BE LIMITED TO NIAMEY-GAO ROAD.

2. DURING RECENT MEETING WITH SOCOPAO REPRESENTATIVE, WE INFORMED OF SOCOPAO INTENTION SEND EMINSSARY TO AID2 WITH PROPOSAL FOR HANDLING U.S. 1974 SAHELIAN RELIEF GRAIN SHIPMENTS TO ALL WEST AFRICAN PORTS. PROPOSAL INCLUDES DEVELOPMENT

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BULK HANDLING CAPACITY AT COTONOU PORT, A PROPOSITION WHICH

EMBASSY SEES POSING SERIOUS PROBLEM TO SMOOTH AND EXPEDITIOUS PORT HANDLING SYSTEM WHICH OPERATED DURING 1972 AND 1973.

A. GIVEN LST MINUTE JUGGLING OF GRAIN SHIP SCHEDULING THAT HAS OCCURRED PREVIOUSLY, SOCOPAO REQUIREMENT OF GUARANTEED MINIMUM 15 DAYS BETWEEN SHIP ARRIVALS NOT REALISTIC. GIVEN MANY VARIABLES IN OCEAN SHIPPING, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT SUCH A TIGHT SCHEDULING COULD BE OBSERVED. AS THERE ARE NO BULK STORAGE FACILITIES AT COTONOU PORT, BUNCHING OF ARRIVALS COULD RESULT IN DELAYS IN UNLOADING WITH INCREASE IN SHIPPING COST AND EXPOSURE OF GRAIN TO ELEMENTS WITH DANGER OF LOSS.

B. GIVEN COMPARATIVE PRODUCTIVITY AVERAGE DAHOMEAN DOCK WORKER WITH US COUNTERPART, QUESTION REAL SAVINGS IN TIME AND MONEY REALIZED FROM BULK SHIPMENT AND BAGGING ON THIS END. MOREOVER, CONSIDERABLE DOUBTS RAISED IN OUR MINDS AS TO SOCOPAO'S ABILITY, STARTING FROM SCRATCH, PLAN, ORGANIZE AND CARRY OUT SMOOTH RUNNING BULK OPERATIONS. THIS WOULD BE COMPLETELY NEW UNDERTAKING FOR THEM, REQUIRING ADDITIONAL LABOR CREWS, MACHINERY AND MANAGEMENT. BELIEVE UNHAPPY EXPERIENCE WITH INITIAL 1973 SHIPMENTS TO TEMA IS INSTRUCTIVE IN THIS REGARD. ALSO, SOCOPAO IS INVOLVED IN UNRESOLVED DISPUTE WITH MRGD UNDER WHICH GOVERNMENT IS DEMANDING LARGE FINE. SHOULD MRGD PRESS CLAIM, IT IS CONCEIVABLE SOCOPAO MAY NOT WISH EXPAND ITS INVESTMENT IN DAHOMEY.

C. FINALLY, BELIEVE THAT EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE, WITHIN GOOD CONTRACTING PROCEDURES, TO CONTINUE CONTRACT WITH AFRICAN TRANSIT AGENT AS OPPOSED TO EUROPEAN-OWNED COMPANY. PLEASED TO LEARN PER REF (B) THAT ADO ALSO INCLINED THIS DIRECTION AND YOU NOT ENAMORED WITH SOCOPAO PROPOSAL. ANDERSON

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## Message Attributes

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